

Trained Teachers in the Mission Field.

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THE last few years have seen great advance in the understanding of the problems of missionary work; the Church is gaining each year clearer views of the magnitude of the task which lies before her in the Christianization of the world, and is constantly adopting a more and more intelligent and statesmanlike policy with regard to it. Not so many years ago a leading educationalist was overheard to say to an intending missionary, "I would not say a word, my dear, to keep *you* from the mission field, but I feel that the place for women of real ability is at home." This may be among the "things one would rather have expressed otherwise," but underlying it was the idea, almost universally current at the time, that "anyone would do" for missionary work, which was vaguely supposed to consist of sitting under palm trees telling Bible stories to open-mouthed and lightly-clad barbarians.

The "palm-tree" era was succeeded by one in which the need for medical missions began to be realized, and the beauty of following Christ in His two-fold work of healing the body and the soul laid hold on the imagination of Christian people. One result

of this view was that the majority of Arts students complacently assumed that the missionary appeal had no message for them, and handed over all responsibility in the matter to their comrades in the medical schools. If here and there a student in an Arts College cherished a desire to become a worker abroad, she was more often than not urged, even by experienced missionaries, to drop her Arts course and take up Medicine, on the plea that no other form of "higher education" was of any real, practical value as a training for the foreign field.

But a third era is now dawning in which, while the element of essential truth in the two former conceptions is being preserved, the main stress is coming to be laid upon training in the science and art of teaching as the *sine qua non* for the highest efficiency in missionary work. The twentieth century is to be emphatically the century of the **Missionary as Teacher.**

This was strikingly evidenced at the Ecumenical Conference held in New York in 1900, when representatives of all the principal missionary societies met to confer over the problems of world-wide evangelization. The result of their deliberations on this head is well summed up in the verdict of one of their leading speakers. "A course of training in teaching is desirable for *all* missionaries; the missionary, not only as an educationalist but also as an evangelist, will be greatly aided by the best modern normal training."

Training in Teaching in its relation to Evangelistic Work. More and more missionaries are coming to feel that preaching to unprepared crowds is of but little use; in the majority of such cases the religion of Christ is presented to minds in dense ignorance. The power of the Oriental to sit motionless through a harangue of any length, apparently absorbed in contemplation of the Infinite, often entraps the unwary missionary; as she sees the dark, liquid eyes of her audience fixed upon her in seemingly rapt attention, she warms to her subject, and pours out a flood of appeal too often couched in phraseology which could only be intelligible to one brought up from childhood in the Christian faith, and when she pauses to take breath, she is apt to receive a cruel awakening by some such query as this—"Are you very poor, that you wear no jewels?" or one by one her audience will slip away, muttering as they go, "Well, we must be cooking our food. Doubtless her words are good, but we understand not English." (Anything unintelligible is assumed by the average villager to be English.) Often the women seem stupid or rebellious, when in reality they are only bewildered; if the principles of teaching were used in presenting the Gospel to them, they would understand more quickly, and the work would be correspondingly more efficient. With an audience one degree more intelligent, the need for the art of teaching is, if possible, still more pressing,

for with them the preaching of an untrained worker may be not merely inadequate and unconvincing, but positively misleading. Of what use is it to give an oration upon God and salvation, and sin, when to the audience "sin" suggests only ceremonial defilement, and "salvation" release from the limits of personality and absorption into the Infinite; and "God" a being to be propitiated and feared, and if possible hoodwinked, but not loved and worshipped as the Being of Infinite Holiness, and Wisdom and Love, Who has shined forth in the face of Jesus Christ? Preaching too often tends to be an indiscriminate sowing out of dogma and appeal; in its place there is a need for real teaching, which has been well called "matching"—matching a piece of truth to a corresponding piece of capacity in the learner. To do this in the best way, there must be a reverent and sympathetic attempt on the part of the teacher to put himself in the place of the learner, and look out on life from his standpoint; and as part of the preparation for this there should be a thorough study of psychology, an acquaintance with the history of teaching, and a practice of its methods.

It is suggestive that Jesus Himself taught more than He preached, and mentioned teaching oftener than preaching; other and all-important spiritual qualifications being equal, the best teachers will be the best evangelists.

Training in Teaching in its relation to Medical Missions. It cannot be too often emphasised that the ultimate aim of all the varied agencies of the mission field is evangelistic, *i.e.*, to make Christ known to the souls of men and women, and so to win them to Him; and in this, which every true missionary looks on as her highest work, she will be greatly helped, be she doctor, nurse, or matron, by a knowledge of the art of teaching, and increasingly will these workers, like all others, seek to obtain a closer acquaintance with it. Few medical workers have time to take up a normal course of any length, and yet some of them already put many of us non-medical workers to shame. One of the best courses of systematic, elementary Bible teaching I have seen was in an Indian Village Hospital, and the best address I ever heard on the art of using the common things around us as object lessons of spiritual truth, was from a doctor now working in Arabia.

The Trained Teacher as a Literary Worker. One of the greatest needs of the mission field to-day is for a wider, fuller Christian literature in the different vernaculars, books to help young converts in Bible study, books both for Christians and for non-Christians—presenting Jesus Christ and Christian thoughts and ideals; books, too, not solely religious, but such as will deal with all the leading topics of the day, scientific, political, social, and literary, and permeate all with

the Spirit of Christ. How can a missionary do all this, either by adapting and translating existing literature, or by original work, unless she knows something of the principles of teaching and of human nature, which are much the same the world over? Some may urge that a natural literary gift is all that is required, and that is doubtless essential, and much valuable work that has already been accomplished is due to it. But natural aptitude, except in the case of the few men and women of genius who are the exception to all rules, is not sufficient; there must be, in addition, a thorough training in the best methods of the presentment of truth.

Training in Teaching in its relation to Educational Missions. The day is past when the necessity of special training for educational work needs any champion; it is universally admitted by thinking people to be a self-evident fact. And therefore it is only necessary to state that all the chief missionary societies have, at the present time, Colleges with students taking full University degrees, High Schools, Boarding Schools, and Orphanages, for both Christian and non-Christian girls, and that hardly one of these has a really adequate staff even for present requirements, to say nothing of the constant opportunities for extension, which have to be neglected for lack of workers, and it will at once be seen how great is the opening in the mission field for educa-

tionalists of every kind, and of the very highest attainments.*

But the subject on which I want to lay special stress, and which is too often overlooked, is the enormous need and opportunity that exist in the direction of

Elementary Education.

In India over 90 per cent. of the population are still illiterate; in the Madras Presidency, which, educationally, is probably the most advanced Province in India, there are 13,000 villages of over 200 in population without any schools whatever.

A leading educational missionary in China gives the following testimony with regard to the need there:—"In China, only one woman in 10,000 can read. Teachers are in constant demand, and cannot be supplied fast enough; in some of the larger cities the Chinese ladies themselves are opening schools for their girls. Japan, too, is sending her teachers, and they are opening schools for girls. So the demand, the opportunity is there. The schools that are being opened so rapidly by the Japanese and by the Chinese themselves are non-Christian schools—anti-Christian schools most of them—and it remains for the Christian Church to decide whether she will rise to this opportunity, and send to them Christian educationalists, that this tide may be turned for Christ, and that China may be won for

* For further particulars *re* this side of educational missionary work cf. Miss Rouse's pamphlet, "Women Students in the Mission Field."

Him in this generation. There is the same overwhelming need for the rudiments of education in Africa, and in every other non-Christian land.

It seems as if, in the Providence of God, educational work, elementary or otherwise, is ever the precursor of anything like widely-spread spiritual blessing. The mighty waves of revival, which have of late been sweeping over the home Churches, have awakened a longing among many true Christians for similar manifestations of God's power throughout the world. The testimony of one who has been for many years a Wesleyan missionary in India, is well worth pondering in this connection. He says:—"The Holy Spirit does mightily save souls in every heathen land, but a revival in the sense that we have learned to associate the term with the labours of such men as Moody, does not take place among unprepared Chinese or Hindus. The remarkable thing is that such revivals do occur among those who have been leavened by Christian schools. When, a year or two ago, one of our English evangelists made a special campaign in Ceylon, many were brought to Christ, but with scarcely an exception every convert had been educated in some mission school." So far has this principle, and its attendant corollaries, been accepted by the Church Missionary Society, that in Uganda, one of its most encouraging spheres of influence, the rule (with occasional necessary exceptions) is that none

are admitted to baptism till they have first learned to read.

Three-quarters of the educational work of that great society is elementary, and there is a similar proportion in the work of most of the leading missionary boards; and yet, as the foregoing statistics have shown, but the barest fringe of this work is being touched. In the following directions there is almost limitless room for extension in area and improvement in method.

1. Primary Schools. A visit to an elementary mission school in one of our Indian cities or villages would probably be a considerable shock to a student from a British Training College. At some distance off the ear would begin to be deafened by the sound of many discordant voices; stooping to enter a low doorway and making her way along a narrow and gloomy passage, the student would find herself in a small, not over clean courtyard, round the four roofed-in sides of which are ranged from forty to fifty little girls, of ages ranging from five to twelve, some in rags, others gorgeously decked out in silks and jewels, but all grimy. Some are laughing and talking together, others shouting at the top of their voice in the hope of impressing at once the lesson on their memory, and their virtuous diligence upon their teacher. This teacher is in most cases a woman who herself can read but imperfectly, and whose store of religious knowledge is comprised in

a few of the simplest narratives from the Old and New Testament. Now she goes from one little group to another "hearing their lessons," now she assembles the whole school to tell them some Gospel story, or to hear them recite Scripture texts or the multiplication table. Could the most highly-trained teacher in the world teach five or six classes at the same time?

It is marvellous how much actually is accomplished in the face of these tremendous odds; hundreds do learn somehow or other to read, and when at twelve they have to leave school, and are condemned for life to the living death of the Zenana, many can at least take back with them the Bible and one or two simple Christian books; and though they may not always have courage to make a public confession in baptism, yet not a few learn enough of the love of Jesus to trust their souls to His keeping. There are, I am convinced, more of these secret believers than most of us have any idea of. And yet how incomparably more might be done if each school had an adequate staff of trained teachers, and if the number of these schools were multiplied till no village in the world was without one. I would be the last to under-rate the grand work that is being done in many of these schools, and yet there is to me in this world no sadder thing than to visit one of them, to look into the faces of those little ones, as bright and eager as any here in England, and to think of the possibilities of their lives, and of the lives of

millions of other children not yet gathered into schools at all, possibilities in the vast majority of cases doomed never to be realized. And why? Simply because Christians at home, to whom God has given the requisite knowledge and training, are too selfish, or too indifferent, or too ignorant of their need to come to their help.

2. Zenana Teaching. Though the work of house-to-house visitation is not so hopeful as that in the schools, yet the need is equally great. When our little pupils leave school at twelve years of age, how much they have still to learn, how infinite is their need for all the sympathy and help that we can bring to them in their new life as wives and mothers! Many women and children also have never been allowed to leave their homes and come to school; if they are to be reached at all, it can only be as the teacher goes to them. At present, even in the best-worked mission centres, only a few hundred of the many thousand homes in the city are being regularly visited, and in almost every case but a weekly lesson is possible. Think of trying to teach a child—and, still worse, a grown-up woman—to read at the rate of a few letters of the alphabet per week!

In India the Government, which has so long left this matter entirely to the missionaries, is intending to take seriously in hand the problem of the education of Zenana women, and is contemplating the inauguration of a system of trained “peri-

patetic teachers" to meet the need. Unless the Church of Christ rises without delay, the unique opportunity, which has been hers for the last fifty years, of influencing the home-life of India will be lost to her forever, trifled away by her inveterate slackness and coldness of heart.

3. Sunday Schools. In this direction there is an immense field of opportunity as yet almost untouched. Here and there American missionaries are leading the way, and making the Sunday School teaching so efficient and attractive that the whole Church, children and adults alike, flock to the Sunday School every week for systematic Bible Study. The effect of this upon the whole community, and through them upon the surrounding non-Christians, can be imagined.

A system of first-class Sunday Schools for non-Christians also is greatly needed; in places where such are to be found they are immensely appreciated by the people.

4. Kindergarten Work. All that has been already said will show that for this there is practically an unlimited demand in the foreign field. Even in places where, for various reasons, it may be impossible to introduce the complete system, teachers fully trained in it and imbued with the spirit and ideals of such men as Froebel, can do more for the people than perhaps any other kind of missionary. Whether in Primary or Sunday School, or in Zenana teaching, the

introduction of modified Kindergarten methods would be of incalculable value.

The mission field needs pre-eminently women of sympathetic spirit and of original and independent mind, who will not follow slavishly or seek to impose upon others any cut and dried system of education, which, however excellently adapted to the country in which it took origin, is foreign to the temperament of the East, but who will drink in something of the spirit of the people among whom they have come to work, and know how to express the universal principles of teaching in forms suited to the new conditions.

With an army of such workers, the problem of women's education in the East would be solved.

The work before them would be two-fold :—

(a) To supervise and inspect districts, each of which would contain a given number of Primary Schools, Zenanas, and Sunday Schools.

(b) To train picked girls in each country as elementary teachers.

Any who are looking forward to work in pupil teacher centres, would find very similar work awaiting them in the mission field. The experience gained also by a few years of preliminary teaching at home is often of great value.

In this work of elementary education, if in no other, it is clear that the main part must be accomplished by the people of each country. Even were it desirable, the foreign

missionary could never be supplied in anything like sufficient numbers; the work of the foreigner must be mainly that of training and supervision. If for the actual teaching training is needed, how far more essential is it that those who are to train the teachers should have a thorough knowledge of the science and art of teaching? Training Schools must be indefinitely multiplied on the mission field before this work can be at all adequately taken in hand, and to whom can we turn for those who shall take charge of them, unless to the students now in our Training Colleges at home?

There comes to such to-day the call of a great need and a great opportunity.

For every trained teacher led to offer for missionary service, there is a vacant place in the mission field, one which in all human probability will never be filled at all if she does not come forward; and whatever be the discouragements and difficulties she may have to face, she will not be without what is perhaps the greatest inspiration in life—the sense that she is needed, and that she is in the place where her life will tell most for the Kingdom of God.

The women of non-Christian lands are looking to the students of the West for leadership; the college woman of to-day has an opportunity absolutely unparalleled in the world's history. A missionary from China, speaking to the Women Students assembled at the last great Student Volunteer Conference in America, gave the following as

her personal conviction :—" Those of us who have seen the opportunities at home, and yet have also had the privilege of seeing something of the opportunity that the college woman with trained mind has to work for Christ in foreign lands, would say that we would not for anything but the clear indication that God is keeping us in this country, stay here and miss those opportunities of service. I cannot think what you could offer to me that would keep me at home, with the opportunity that I know calls to me in China, to be there in the making of the Empire that is to be in these coming years, and to have some part in helping the women of China to take their place in it."

It is a solemnizing thought that our short-sighted wilfulness may thwart God's purpose for our lives, and cheat us out of the best things life has to offer.

" Choose for us, God, nor let our weak preferring
 " Rob us of good Thou hast for us designed."

Our only safety lies in an utter, child-like surrender to Him for the work that He shall choose, whether it be at home or abroad. He will not fail to make clear His will for us, and we shall find it to be, not something abnormal and unreasonable, but " good and acceptable and perfect," the one service which will use and draw out all the faculties of our being, and make life in the fullest and most glorious sense " worth while."

" He shall choose our inheritance for us."
 " Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God."

